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Hygiene ratings: Red Planet Pizza in London Road and Carmella Patisserie in Ewell Road were among several outlets given zero ratings

OFF THE MENU

Several venues given nil or one-star food hygiene ratings

REPORTER

RACHAEL BURFORD

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A host of Kingston bars, restaurants, food shops and cafés have been told to urgently improve their hygiene standards.

Five of the borough's food establishments, including a wedding cake shop, a gastro pub and a Chinese restaurant, are running under a zero star food hygiene rating, known as the "scores on the doors", according to the Food Standards Agency website.

A further 36 places where food

is served received one-star ratings when health inspectors last visited. That means owners were told to immediately improve their cleanliness standards or face closure.

But many are not inspected again by Kingston and Sutton's shared environment services for a year after the bad rating.

Carmella Patisserie, in Ewell Road, Red Planet Pizza, in London Road, the Oak pub in Richmond Road and Tasty Fried Chicken and Seven Stars Chinese, both in Tolworth Broadway, all received zero-star ratings when inspected between March and December

last year. Cake shop Carmella Patisserie was given the bottom rating in November despite glowing five-star reviews from customers online.

Owner Amir Ebrahimi, 36, said: "At the time the council inspected us we were carrying out some electric works. Some of the cables were behind the shop and they found this very dangerous for anyone who visited the shop."

"I worked on the advice they gave me and I want them to come back and inspect us to see the improvements we have made."

The Oak, which was refurbished just over a year ago, was the only

pub on the "zero" list. Managers did not respond to a request for comment.

A spokesman for Kingston's environment services team said inspectors look at how hygienically food is prepared, cooked and stored, the cleanliness and condition of the building and whether they are confident standards will be maintained in the future.

He said: "We operate a graduated response and take formal action only as a last resort."

The Kingston Guardian attempted to contact all zero rated outlets. For the full story visit kingstonguardian.co.uk.

Inside



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PROF'S DREAM SHATTERED



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DAD'S ARMY ON THE MARCH



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Passengers' rating is up

SOUTH West Trains has said passengers' satisfaction with its services in 2015 increased by 1 per cent from 2014.

The government watchdog Transport Focus found overall satisfaction with services stands at 81 per cent, according to a report issued on January 27. Train frequency satisfaction, often the subject of debate for commuters in south west London, is up by 3 per cent.

South West Trains' customer services director Arthur Pretorius said: "This is a credit to our employees who work hard to deliver the best service for our customers. We are continuing to make major investment to improve our stations and trains, and today's results are a clear sign that this is starting to have a real impact."

Transport Focus chief executive Anthony Smith said: "While improvements and investments to the railway to cope with [growth] are long overdue and very welcome, the process of rebuilding is proving painful in some places."

LEAH welcomes PM's decision to help Muslim women learn English and boost integration

Move to invest £20m in language

REPORTER

ELLIE CAMBRIDGE

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DAVID Cameron's announcement that he will invest more into languages is music to the ears of a Kingston and Richmond organisation that teaches English to isolated women.

The prime minister said that a £20million fund is now available to help Muslim women in the UK learn English.

Kate Brown, director of Learning English At Home (LEAH), said that although focussing on a specific group of people – in this case Muslim women – 'is not necessarily helpful' the organisation thinks his message that language is essential is 'brilliant'.

Mr Cameron told BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme: "I'm not saying there's some sort of causal connection between not speaking English and becoming an extremist – of course not, that would be a ridiculous thing to say."

"But if you're not able to speak English, you're not able to integrate, you may find, therefore, that you have challenges understanding what your identity is and you could be more susceptible to the extremist message that comes from Daesh."

On Mr Cameron's suggestions lack of language could increase the possibility of extremist reactions, Mrs Brown said: "Language learning does improve people's confidence and that equips them to be more engaged, and for those that know more

about extremism, that is part of the puzzle."

LEAH works mostly on the basis of referrals, which come from GPs or midwives. The process of language learning in this case involves volunteer tutors visiting students at home, building skills and a friendship.



Learning: A student is instructed by a volunteer for LEAH

Amira Medjodvic, once a student and now a volunteer tutor and trustee for LEAH, arrived in the UK from Bosnia in 1993.

She said: "I was extremely unconfident, I didn't want to go anywhere really and at that moment I was pregnant with my second child."

"It was so important to have someone who would come to your house and give you lessons. It just gives you that little bit of confidence."

"LEAH for me was like something sent from heaven."

"That was the first step. That organisation was really close to my heart, I know how important it

is to have this. It's not just learning English. The volunteer helped me so much to learn about society."

The majority of LEAH's clients are women. There is no time limit for lessons, but on average clients are paired up with a volunteer for about a year.

A concrete rule is that learners cannot be matched with a volunteer who speaks the same first language as them – English must be used at every opportunity.

For more details about volunteering visit leah.org.uk/volunteering-would-you-like.

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Pupils scoop second place in UK for results

KINGSTON'S GCSE pupils have missed out on being crowned the UK's brightest by just half a percentage point.

The proportion of the borough's pupils notching five or more A* to C grades, including English and maths, stands at 73.2 per cent – just short of the Scilly Isles' figure of 73.7 per cent for 2014-15.

Although just pipped to the top spot in the main category, Kingston was number one for the percentage of pupils achieving A* to C in English and maths GCSEs or an equivalent.

The borough saw 75.7 per cent of students achieve the standard.

Councillor Andrea Craig, cabinet member for schools, said: "I think this is just a

fantastic achievement not only by the pupils but also the teachers within the borough and it truly shows the hard work and dedication both in terms of the pupils, the parents who support them and also the teachers who dedicate so many resources to making sure that Kingston is such a great place to learn."

"We are incredibly proud that the Kingston borough is second in the country."

Tolworth Girls' School head teacher Siobhan Lowe said: "It's a real testament to the hard-working teachers we have in our schools and I also think it's a testament to the students. I do think it's quite sad that we are on a table. We are trying to achieve well-rounded people as well as good results."

Pair jailed after cops seize cannabis worth £63,000

TWO men have been jailed after police seized £63,000 worth of cannabis from a house in Surbiton.

Police discovered more than 300 cannabis plants when they raided the house in Alexandra Drive, Berrylands, last September after neighbours told police they believed the drug was being cultivated inside.

Duc Nguyen, 41, and Tuan Min Dang, 52, both of no fixed address, were found inside the house and arrested, Kingston police said.

Both admitted growing the cannabis at Kingston Crown Court on Monday, January 18.

Dang was sentenced to 12 months in prison, and Nguyen was jailed for 58 weeks.

They were ordered to pay



Jailed: Dang and Nguyen

a victim surcharge of £100 each.

Police discovered a tunnel leading to exposed electrical cables coming from a main power grid outside.

CONTACTS

Calls may be monitored for training purposes

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US man's research dream ruined

REPORTER

RACHAEL BURFORD

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AN AMERICAN Shakespeare scholar had his dreams of studying at Kingston University ruined when he was arrested and imprisoned for 10 days by immigration police, despite being in the UK legally.

Dr Paul Hamilton, 42, has lived in the country for nine years, but was arrested on January 17 at his home in Stratford-upon-Avon and taken to the Morton Hall Immigration Removal Centre near Lincoln.

He was arrested even though his application for a visa extension was still being considered. He had even bought a return ticket to the US in case his application was rejected.

He was released last Wednesday, but while detained the deadline for the research fellowship application he had worked on for months – which he hoped would land him a role at Kingston – expired.

Dr Hamilton said: "I worked on the application for months and tried my best to get it together [in prison] but I couldn't have access to my research, and without that it just couldn't be done. They call it detention, but actually it's prison. You have bars, cells, barbed wire fences, all of the traits of prison."

Dr Hamilton is also a part of the Kingston Shakespeare Seminar, which aims to make the Rose Theatre a world centre for Shakespeare study and performance.

He said: "The guy who arrested me felt really bad about doing it. He even refused to process me and called his superior to ask: 'Is this really the sort of person we want



Forced out: Dr Paul Hamilton can only appeal the Home Office's decision after leaving the UK

to arrest?" The Home Office came back and said I was exactly the sort of person they wanted to arrest."

Dr Hamilton had applied for leave to remain in the country un-

der the 10 year route, meaning he had to prove he had friends or family in the UK. He can appeal only after leaving the UK.

A Home Office spokeswoman

said: "Mr Hamilton's application for indefinite leave to remain in the UK was refused on the grounds that he did not satisfy the relevant criteria."

RACIAL ATTACK: A New Malden man must pay a fine of £990 and court costs of £650 after he was found guilty of a racially aggravated assault. Martin Ford, of Appleton Gardens, denied the charge on October 26, 2015, but was found guilty after a trial last week. The 46-year-old was sentenced on January 25 at Wimbledon Magistrates' Court.

ENGINEER BID: A Kingston College student has become a sustainable energy company's first engineering apprentice. Cameron Douglas will join Dearman, a company specialising in zero-emission power and cooling, for four days a week as part of the scheme. The company expects him to be the first of many new apprentices it will take from the college.

GET VOUCHERS: A supermarket chain will give out vouchers of up to £15 to help schools and clubs in Kingston get sports and cooking equipment. Sainsbury's Active Kids programme, which encourages healthy eating, returns to Kingston's Sainsbury's store in Sury Basin until Tuesday, May 3. For more information visit activekids.sainsbury.co.uk

DRINK DIARY: Kingston Council has launched an alcohol awareness website that shows you if you are drinking too much and what it means for your health. It includes a drink diary that helps users calculate how many units of alcohol they consume weekly and also has NHS information on drinking and calories, binge drinking and what people can do if they are concerned about someone else's drinking. Visit e-drink-check.kingston.gov.uk

STAR VISITOR: Michael Portillo visited Hampton Court by train as part of his TV series *Great British Railway*, and also stopped at Brooklands Museum and Claremont House in Esher. The former Conservative MP used the Hampton Court line.

Nursing students tell of their passion for job at conference



Conference: Nursing students shared their experiences through the Student Nurse Academic Partnership

NURSING students from Kingston University had the floor at a conference celebrating their passion for the job.

More than 100 student nurses joined the conference at St George's, University of London. The Student Nurse Academic Partnership (SNAP) conference, held on January 13, was designed to empower nursing students.

Sixteen students delivered presentations on nursing theory and practice.

Second year mental health nursing student Aurelia Edmiston said: "To be given a platform to express an issue I feel so passionate about, with such a wide variety of audience members, was

incredible. It's so rare that students, faculty staff of all positions and alumni can come together in a forum to share ideas and experiences, and yet it's so important for us – particularly in nursing – to continue that discourse."

Associate professor in children's nursing Jayne Price said: "The sessions were extremely conducive to learning and embraced the ethos of knowledge development with and from each other in partnership."

"The questions and debates from the presentations gave students and lecturers an extremely effective opportunity to openly express their views."

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CUTTING BILLS: Kingston Environment Centre will run a series of workshops in February about cutting the cost of household bills. The first session, between 10am and 1pm on February 6, will focus on cheap and simple home improvements that anyone can undertake. Visit ttingston.org to reserve a space.

CITY CLEAN-UP: London mayor Boris Johnson is offering grants of up to £1,500 to Kingston residents to help clean up the borough's streets. The Capital Clean-up, in its fifth year, offers residents the chance to apply for the grant as well as clean-up kits to volunteer to improve the borough's streets. To apply for the grants visit london.gov.uk/cleanup.

SLEEP EASY: A cardboard village will pop up in Kingston to raise money for charity and awareness about homelessness. Next month groups of families and friends have the opportunity to take on the challenge of sleeping rough at the YMCA's annual sleep-easy event on Friday, February 26. Find out more about the charity's fundraising event by visiting ymcalsw.org/sleep-easy.

SUPPORT SIR: A teacher will take on the London Marathon to raise money for a children's charity. Ciaran McAuley, a Year 6 teacher from the Study School in New Malden who adopted two children in 2013, has decided to support the NSPCC. To donate visit uk.virginmoneygiving.com/Mrmcauleythestudyschool.

Victims scream, have fits and slump over in the street

Men collapse after 'taking dodgy drugs'

REPORTERS

RACHAEL BURFORD
AND ELLIE CAMBRIDGE

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A CONTAMINATED batch of drugs is suspected to have hospitalised a group of men and been responsible for closing a Kingston town centre arcade last Wednesday afternoon.

Adam's Walk, off Eden Street, was cordoned off by police just before 3pm after worried shoppers reported four men screaming, fitting and slumping in the street.

Three men were taken to hospital after what police believe was a reaction to "dodgy drugs". Laurence Antwi, who works at Moss in Eden Street, said: "We heard them screaming. I didn't know how many there were. You could hear the sound."

"We didn't know nothing [when the police arrived]. We just received information to shut our door and that's it."

London Ambulance Service paramedics treated five men at the scene and took two to Kingston Hospital. Another man was rushed to St George's Hospital in Tooting as a priority.



Collapse: Adam's Walk

other man was rushed to St George's Hospital in Tooting as a priority.

Witness and Kingston university student Melissa Moody said: "[Someone] was saying that he knew four of the men and that they had taken legal highs, after which they collapsed."

"While I was there a fifth man was found."

"There were at least five

police cars and three ambulances."

A Metropolitan police spokesman said: "We were called by members of the public concerned about the welfare of four men. The suspicion is they had taken some dodgy drugs. They didn't seem very well at all."

Police with sniffer dogs were later seen searching the area.

Sophiane Bessa, who works at Charles Birch Scotland, a shoe repair and key cutting shop in Adam's Walk, said: "I had seen a couple of guys standing outside and then I had a car key to do so I went to the back, locked the shop, and started with the car key."

"When I came back I found one person fallen next to the shop and then I saw others nearby."

He added that the people looked to be in their mid-40s.

Kingston police tweeted: "Police called to four people unconscious on the floor fitting, believed that they have taken shared drugs."

Adam's Walk was reopened just after 5.30pm.



New look: Amy Jones with daughter Mia, 10

£25k gift for child A&E

A CHILDREN'S charity has donated thousands to spruce up the paediatric accident and emergency at Kingston Hospital.

The renovation of the waiting area, which can host up to 86 people a day, includes new tables, toys and a drinks machine as well as a seaside mural.

Aoife McDonagh, of Thomas Cook Children's Charity, which donated £25,000 to Mo-

mentum of Kingston, said: "We are delighted to be able to support Momentum and their work at Kingston paediatric A&E."

"This has enhanced the waiting room area with children in mind, making visits to the hospital less daunting and stressful."

It comes as Bentalls department store announced it has raised nearly £14,000 for the charity since 2010.

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Holocaust survivor and educator dies aged 90 with 'no hate in him'

REPORTER

ELLIE CAMBRIDGE

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A HOLOCAUST survivor who lived through five years at Auschwitz, and turned his traumatic experience into a valuable series of talks for Kingston's schoolchildren, has died.

Martin Bennett died aged 90 from non-Hodgkin's lymphoma on Thursday, January 21.

He was a Berrylands resident for more than 50 years and most recently lived in Raeburn Avenue.

Born in Poland in 1925, he was forced into a labour camp in Poznan aged 13 after the German invasion of the country in 1939.

From Poznan Mr Bennett, whose Polish surname is Izbicki, was sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau, where one of his six brothers had already been incarcerated.

His brother told Mr Bennett to say he was older than he was, which meant he survived the selection. They saw out the war together and finally parted ways when his brother moved to Israel, and Mr Bennett travelled to live with relatives in London.

Mr Bennett told the *Surrey Comet* in 2012: "My brother was the hero of my life. He saved me.

"When we parted it was the saddest time for me.

"But then I met Priscilla. She sent me a message saying she wanted me to come to her house.

"It was not me that she wanted to meet but another boy called Martin. But she got me!"

Mr Bennett leaves behind his wife Priscilla, whom he met after arriving in Britain in 1947. They were



Educator: Martin Bennett, who survived Auschwitz during the Holocaust, has died

married for more than 60 years, with many of those years spent running a clothes shop in Cheam. From the happy marriage came two daughters, three grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

He enjoyed golf, and could be found in his "office" on the greens at Coombe Hill Golf Club most

days. His funeral was held at the club, where more than 100 members attended last Sunday.

His daughter, Bernice Graham, said: "He was a man that made good with his life, he never had any hate left in him."

After Mr Bennett retired he regularly talked to schoolchildren

about his experiences during the Holocaust, and became part of Holocaust Memorial Week.

He told the *Comet* the horrors of Auschwitz still haunted him. He said: "This is why it is so important that I come here and talk to young people, so something like this can never happen again."

'Inappropriate' school design is turned down



Rejected: The proposed design

PLANS to build a 420-place free school in Norbiton have been rejected after councillors labelled the design "totally inappropriate".

The design was put forward so that Kingston Community School could move to a permanent site.

The school currently runs from a former NHS clinic in Acre Road.

Developers aimed to demolish condemned office block Kingstons House and replace it with a seven-storey building with 2,406 sq m of floor space and a base-mast sports hall, plus 25 flats.

Cobham Road resident Carmelina Critcher said: "It's difficult to see how the roads will cope with the flow of cars running through."

St James councillor Jack Cheetham quizzed supporting officers on whether there was any evidence the site's pollution levels were "safe for children".

Cllr Lorraine Rolfe criticised a lack of disabled parking.

School provider Chapel Street, a Christian organisation, was encouraged to return to the council with revised plans.

Traffic fears over Lidl's HQ



PLANS to build Lidl's headquarters on the corner of Jubilee Way, in Tolworth, will "cause severe nuisance", according to the Chessington District Residents' Association.

The group said a planned 440-space car park for the build, which it is hoped will bring 500 jobs to the borough, would increase traffic and pollution in an area "notorious" for those problems.

It said: "The proposed development will seriously increase the severe traffic problems in Tolworth and adjacent suburbs. It will cause severe nuisance to businesses on the Chessington Industrial Estate."

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Sandra Coombs' award for "contribution to the community"

'Scooter nan' receives an honorary doctorate

REPORTER

RACHAEL BURFORD

rachael.burford@london.newsquest.co.uk

SURBITON'S famous "scooter gran" has received an honorary doctorate from Kingston University.

Sandra Coombs, who is in her 70s, has inspired comments on her youthful spirit as she makes her way around the borough on a foot-powered scooter.

Ms Coombs first joined the university in the late 1990s, graduating with a BA in art, architecture and design history in 2002.

She spent a significant part of her career at the BBC where her various roles included working at the Eurovision Song Contest and assisting Latin American broadcasters during the 1966 World Cup.

She was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Arts on Friday, January 22.

She said: "I came to a degree quite late. Having looked after my ailing parents for a large part of my adult life, I simply didn't have the time or resources to study at that level. Yet King-

Community spirit: 'Scooter gran' Sandra Coombs

ston University threw open its doors to me in my 60s, and I am eternally thankful for that."

Now she volunteers with St Raphael's Church and the Kingston University chaplain, and also attends the university's fresher's fair every year in support of the KU Christian Society.

Ms Coombs said: "The experience of studying gave me a new lease of life and direction.

I also had the golden opportunity to live and study in Spain on an exchange programme. I hope my legacy will make a real difference to Kingston's future students, particularly as education is becoming more and more expensive."

A university spokesman said the award was "in recognition of her outstanding contribution to Kingston and Surbiton."

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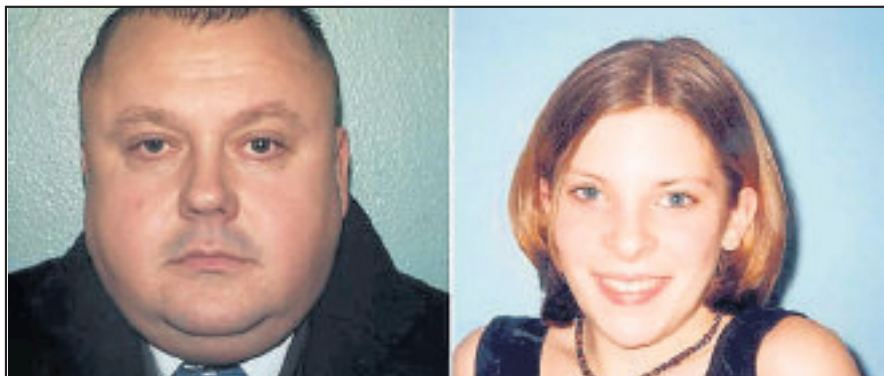
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Serial killer finally admits murdering 13-year-old schoolgirl



Monster: Former Kingston bouncer Levi Bellfield has finally admitted to his crime

I abducted, raped and murdered Milly Dowler

REPORTER

RACHEL DICKERSON

rachel.dickerson@
london.newsquest.co.uk



SERIAL killer Levi Bellfield has finally admitted he abducted, raped and murdered Walton schoolgirl Milly Dowler in 2002.

Bellfield, 47, who has renamed himself Yusuf Rahim in prison after his conviction in 2011, made the admission to detectives investigating an alleged accomplice in Milly's abduction and rape.

Bellfield had never admitted responsibility and refused to give evidence at his trial, where Mr Justice Wilkie said he was a "cruel and pitiless killer" who had not had "the courage to come to

court" for sentencing.

The judge said he had subjected 13-year-old Milly's family to "appalling anguish" over many months of not knowing what had happened to her and, "most cruel of all", he had instructed his lawyers to suggest Milly was a "dark, unhappy and troubled person" who had run away from home.

Milly was abducted on her way home from Heathside School, Weybridge, in March 2002, as she left Walton train station, and was last seen near Bellfield's flat in Collingwood Place, off Station Avenue. Her remains were found in Hampshire six months later.

The former bouncer at Volts in Kingston is now serving a whole-

life sentence in prison, meaning he will never be released.

By the time he came to trial for Milly's murder he had already been convicted of murdering Amélie Delagrangue on Twickenham Green and Marsha McDonnell in Hampton, and of trying to murder Kate Sheedy in an Isleworth industrial estate.

The alleged accomplice, in his 40s, was arrested last Wednesday but released without further action after officers found no evidence to support claims he was involved with Bellfield.

Milly's family said in a statement: "The effect of this information has been devastating for a family which has already had to endure so much."

Go on the run for good cause

PLACES are now open for Human Race's 26th Kingston Breakfast Run.

Organisers said the race is ideal for aspiring marathon runners to build stamina. Pacers will run at six, seven, eight, nine, 10, 11 and 12 minutes per mile over eight, 16 and 20-mile courses. The race begins and ends at Kingston's ancient marketplace and takes runners along the Thames to Hampton Court Palace and back.

Organiser Nick Rusling said: "We know how big this event has become to those training for a big challenge."

"To see that 51 per cent of participants will follow up the Lidl Kingston Breakfast Run with a



Challenge: Last year's race

marathon is no surprise."

Runners are encouraged to raise money for Breast Cancer Care, the official charity partner. Sign up for the April 3 run at humanrace.co.uk/running

Mayor backs new blocks

MAYOR of London Boris Johnson has given the final green light for building work to start on four new high-rise blocks next to Tolworth Tower.

Mr Johnson met with his strategic planning team on Wednesday afternoon to review the controversial plans passed by Kingston Council's development control committee on January 12.

Councillors and residents wrote to the mayor after the decision urging him to quash the

CNM Estates plan but to no avail.

A spokesman for the mayor's office said: "The mayor has been clear about the importance of building the homes the capital so urgently needs."

"This development not only provides a good mix of office and retail use, but will deliver 308 new homes for Londoners."

"His team have carried out an assessment of the plans, which includes a £3m contribution to off-site affordable housing."

£233k prize is claimed

A EUROMILLIONS lottery ticket worth more than £233,000, bought in Kingston last October but unclaimed since then, has finally been redeemed.

A mystery winner will take home a total of £233,306.20 after matching five numbers from a EuroMillions draw on Tuesday, October 6, 2015.

The winning numbers were published last week in a bid to find the winner, who had gone more than four months without claiming the prize.

A National Lottery spokesman said: "It would have been awful if the ticket holder had missed out on this substantial and life-enhancing amount of money."

"We hope that they will enjoy their win."



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Faulty speakers make it impossible for sightless Jennifer to use trains

Blind woman almost steps onto rail tracks at station

REPORTER

JON MITCHELL

jonathan.mitchell@
london.newsquest.co.uk



AN "INTERMITTENT fault" with New Malden station's announcement system has left a blind woman stranded at unmanned stations and caused her to almost walk on the tracks.

Jennifer Carpenter, of Malden Hill, said the station's faltering loudspeakers have caused her frequently to board the wrong train over the past 14 weeks.

On one occasion she said she was left abandoned at the unmanned Berrylands station and, in trying to leave, almost stepped onto the railway.

She said: "It was a platform I'd never been to in my life. Had I stepped forward I would have been on the tracks."

"I've done everything I can possibly do, we've spoken to guards on trains and the station staff and nothing seems to be happening at all. If I can't hear I don't know what's coming. For 14 weeks it's just unacceptable."

South West Trains, which is responsible for the PA system in New Malden, could not confirm how long the equipment has been malfunctioning.

The rail provider, which is running a consultation into how to improve services until Tuesday, was criticised last week after it was discovered the company had apologised to customers on



Frustrated: Jennifer Carter almost stepped onto the tracks at an unfamiliar station

social media 650 times in one week.

A South West Trains spokesman said: "We're sorry that some passengers at New Malden may have faced inconvenience as a result of an intermittent fault with the PA system. We do have engineers carrying out regular tests to identify the cause of the issue and to rectify it as quickly as possible."

Mrs Carpenter fully lost her sight about two years ago and currently volunteers for Healthwatch Kingston. She

is former vice-chairman of the Kingston Association for the Blind.

She said the problems with the station announcements have caused her to stop travelling on her own.

New Malden councillor Raju Pandya said: "This is unfair. We are sending all these emails and complaints and concerns. Where do the priorities lie? Every other station is fine. Why can't we have a simple announcement like all the other stations have?"

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- ◆ Enjoy a cruise on the River Exe and a visit to Fursdon.
- ◆ Enjoy a farewell lunch in the New Forest

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Boris gives final green light to Tolworth Tower

I am not a fan of CNM Estates and the way they have bought large chunks of our borough simply to build dross & mediocre (at best) developments. However, that having been said, it is without doubt that Tolworth remains ugly and is in real need of some kind of regeneration, it's just not a welcoming place to visit or shop. Forgetting the political and commercial aspects in this new development for a moment, is it not possible that after all the inevitable disruption by the demolition and build, that this development could actually bring some good? I am not suggesting that it will, I am simply asking.

WOTAPALAVR

You're right that Tolworth looks tired and ugly and is in need of regeneration. A large share of the blame for this sits with RBK administrations (of all political persuasions) who have done almost nothing over the last 30 years to invest in the area. It strikes me that through all of the arguing for and against the development of the Tolworth Tower site that a key point has been ignored and that is that the majority of residents actually welcome the redevelopment of Tolworth.

PETERF17



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If complaining about third party comments on our website articles, you should use the 'report this post' function online next to the comment.

Appalled

I WAS born, brought up and lived in Kingston until the age of 30.

Recently, for the first time in many years, I visited my old haunts.

I remember Kingston centre as being attractive and well-kept. Understandably, much has changed, not least the road system through the centre of the town and the increased number of quality shops. However, one change appalled me.

The centre of the town now bears resemblance to a disordered rubbish tip, littered with cigarette butts, plastic bags, cans and other assorted detritus.

The litter clearly had not been removed for some considerable time.

Has the council lost all pride and concern about the appearance of the town centre at pavement level and have the residents given up trying?

DOUGLAS KEDGE
Reading

Design

HOW do we hope future generations will judge our choice of building design? Will they say: "Wow, 2016, what a brilliant year that was. Huge masses of skyscraper square solid blocks of flats in town centres, overshadowing the types of homes we actually want to be living in?"

Or will people in the future be able to say: "They knew what makes for a happy community. They cleared away the ugly areas, built attractive, well-designed houses which were sound proofed, well insulated, with rooms big enough for not



Jenny Tarbutt took this photo of a barge decorated for Australia Day. If you would like to see your picture in Borough View email it, with details of where you took it, to rachael.burford@london.newsquest.co.uk

only a bed, but somewhere to put clothes and belongings, and with outdoor space."

Otherwise, what is the legacy we leave?

High-rise flats seem to be the way councils are attempting to quickly fill the quota of homes needed.

How much community spirit is there in a large block of flats where people don't see one another and live too close for comfort?

We have to build homes, and I'm sure we can, but not in a way that destroys our area and community.

Borough view

Long-term planning, by people who care about other people and this country a whole lot more than their own ambitions, can make it happen.

CHRISTINE ARNOLD
via email

Thank you

ON BEHALF of Momentum I just wanted to say a huge thank you to everyone at Newsquest Media Group for the generous grant we received from the Ganett Foundation for £7,450.

We are delighted to have been

successful in our application, and as you know, it will enable us to purchase a 3D sensory pain distraction unit, which we will make available to the families we support at Epsom Hospital's paediatric unit.

We rely entirely on individual fundraising so this award really will make an enormous difference.

We'd love to hear from local companies, organisations and individuals who might like to get involved. Visit momentum-uk.org.

BIANCA EFFEMY
Founder, Momentum

Anyone monitoring polluters?

THANK you for publishing the serious issue of air pollution from traffic, which concerns us in the New Malden Residents' Association, as the A3 loops around us and the Malden Way section is one of the pollution blackspots in Kingston.

I am intrigued by the suggestion (Zac backs a Tolworth tunnel to beat traffic, January 22) that the problem

of traffic pollution on the A3 could be addressed by a short tunnel of perhaps 1km near the Tolworth roundabout.

But I'm afraid that the artist's impression provided is unclear as to what is proposed.

James Berry MP has a more ambitious proposal, and 'would like to see the whole of the A3 tunnelled through the borough'. If this is meant literally,

the tunnel would start near Coombe Boys' School and end west of the Hook roundabout, a distance of about 6km, which would certainly be ambitious.

If that were the case, since the A3 is not just a commuter route but one of the few east-west routes in Kingston, how would access points to the A3 within the borough be managed?

Lastly, and not related to the tunnel, at present vehicles which are too polluting to enter the low emission zone are told to leave the A3 at the Malden slip road, where presumably a proportion would then travel through New Malden. Is anyone monitoring these polluters?

LIZ MEERABEAU
New Malden Residents' Association

Swapping saliva with your favourite pet is a step too far

Editor Andrew Parkes has a number of thoughts every week, here are just five of them

5 THOUGHTS OF THE WEEK...

1. I know people love their pets and can get a bit carried away, dressing up their dogs or putting cats on leads. I myself had a dog and thoroughly enjoyed the experience. But, some pet owner behaviour I've witnessed just isn't normal. Sorry, but kissing cats and dogs isn't right and tongues being shared is definitely a step too far. I know dogs have cleaner mouths than ours, but really.

2. In any business you quickly learn there are certain departments it's not worth falling out with - IT top of the list. Of course, like everything these days there has to be a form,

or preferably several forms, before anything can be done. On one recent IT form I noticed the term PICNIC. Apparently it's IT shorthand for 'Problem in chair, not in computer'.

3. I'm perfectly prepared to admit I don't buy flowers anywhere near often enough, just ask my wife. Mind you, I can't remember the last time she bought me any either. Though one thing is for sure, I'm not buying any more from a florist shop as they just don't last. I don't know what the reason is, whether it

the temperature at which their stored, but supermarket flowers are much fresher.

4. If cyclists want to be respected and treated with due courtesy they need to act appropriately. If, however, they insist upon ignoring the rules of the road and then acting abusively towards concerned drivers then they deserve everything they get. It is simple, treat people as you would wish to be treated yourself.



5. Finally, what's the rule on bad luck received if you don't take down your Christmas decorations? Whatever it is, we're in trouble as Father Christmas is still hanging from our office ceiling. Mind you, the festive season begins so early nowadays maybe someone thinks February is fine to start preparing for 2016's celebrations?

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**JOSH
HOWIE**



THIS WEEK'S REASONS TO GO OUT

BOOKS Agatha Christie: Queen of Crime at Twickenham Library from 2.30pm to 3.30pm on Saturday: Nick Dobson presents an illustrated talk about the mysterious life and work of the world's best-selling author and the writer of The Mousetrap, the world's longest running play. Tickets cost £3 including refreshments.

COMEDY The Comedy Store at the Rose Theatre, Kingston, on Sunday: The world-free Comedy Store returns to Kingston with a line-up including Canadian Peter White, Funmbi Omatoto, Josh Howie, The Noise Next Door and compere Ben Norris. Go to rosetheatrekington.org

MUSIC Light Years at Banquet Records, Kingston, from 5pm on Sunday. The US pop-punk band, on tour with Welsh rockers Neck Deep, play an in-store gig in Kingston in support of their second album I'll See You When I See You. Go to banquetrecords.com

THEATRE The White Devil at Mary Wallace Theatre, Twickenham Riverside, until Saturday. Don't miss Richmond Shakespeare Society's take on John Webster's (a younger contemporary of Shakespeare) play about sex, murder and revenge. Tickets cost £14 for non-members. Go to richmondshakespeare.org.uk or call 020 8744 0547.

MORE ONLINE
kingstonguardian.co.uk

Vibe

Don't panic! Dad's Army has been revived but with a cast including Sir Michael Gambon, Sir Tom Courtenay, Catherine Zeta-Jones and Toby Jones, it's in safe hands. Vibe's **JIM PALMER** spoke to the cast at the film's premiere.



THE BRITPACK

Bringing back a beloved sitcom that means so much to so many is a risky undertaking, but when you've got the best British cast in recent memory on board then that surely makes things simpler.

Director Oliver Parker (Dorian Gray) has enlisted an A-team of Brit talent for Dad's Army to revive the Walmington-on-Sea platoon of the Home Guard made famous in the 1970s sitcom created by David Croft and Barnes' Jimmy Perry.

The cast, to name just a few, includes Hammersmith-born Toby Jones as Captain Mainwaring, Catherine's Bill Nighy as Sergeant Wilson,

Crayford-raised Sir Michael Gambon as Godfrey, Sir Tom Courtenay (Jones), Sarah Lancashire (Mrs Pike), Mark Gatiss (Colonel Theakes), Alison Steadman and Greenwich's Inbetweeners star Blake Harrison as Pike.

Set in 1944, the plot is driven by a spy on the loose in their native Walmington-on-Sea and the arrival of a glamorous journalist, played by Catherine Zeta-Jones.

Speaking on the red carpet at the film's world premiere in Leicester Square last night, Dr Who and Sherlock supremo Mark Gatiss told us it was 'an honour' to be involved in reviving the classic comedy.

He said: "I think everyone was a bit sceptical at first because it is such an institution but Hamish (McColl)'s script is just wonderful and very touching and funny and real and it takes the story on a bit.

"It is set in 1944, which is a bit later than the series, when the Home Guard is actually being wound down.

"Everyone involved is doing it because they love Dad's Army and they want to be involved in it."

For Daniel Mays – whose filmography includes playing Ronnie Biggs opposite Sheridan Smith in Mrs Biggs, Byzantium, Atonement and Vera Drake – it was the chance to

work with the sensational cast which persuaded him to sign up.

He told us: "I can remember seeing them all in films and TV shows. I remember seeing Gambon in The Caretaker and all that sort of stuff. That thing of never meet your heroes because you're going to get disappointed – it wasn't the case.

"They were professional and funny, hard-working and that sort of stuff – an amazing group of actors."

Mays plays the wheeler dealer Private Walker, originally embodied by James Beck in the series, and like the rest of the cast had to come to terms with bringing life to a well-established

character in a way that would be his own but honour the original.

He said: "Whenever I watched James Beck play that role, he made me laugh. He was a warm Walker. You could have played it quite sleazy.

"I wanted to have as much enjoyment with the role as James Beck did. He is the spiv of the cast and brings a great energy to it and he's a ladies man selling nylons and pheasants and chocolates and all that.

"I just wanted to embrace what is great about Joe Walker and just give it over to a new audience."

The 37-year-old said tampering with a show so highly-regarded was

intimidating but worthwhile.

He said: "A lot of people will have the mentality of 'how can you perfect on perfection?' because it's such an iconic show – brilliantly written and superbly performed.

"By its nature, when you have a new group of actors to play those parts, immediately it's different.

"The other thing is this is a great canvas for it to exist on: film technology is so advanced now. We have Steadicam shots and set pieces and stunt work. It just gives the whole thing a bigger place to breathe on."

Dad's Army (PG) is out Friday, February 5.

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EVENTS
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Ghost trains are surely sufficiently spooky without having a proven mind-bender like Derren Brown adding a psychological twist – so be prepared to be scared at Thorpe Park.

The master of illusion will unveil his 'ghost train reinvented for the 21st century' at the Surrey theme park in time for the spring, fusing grand illusion with live action, next-gen tech, 4D special effect and physical transit.

In the first pictures released, we're assured the seven tonne, 20-metre long by four and a half metre tall Victorian train carriage suspended in mid-air is not all it seems.

With 12 journeys and two endings, it won't even know what's coming if you've ridden it before.

Derren Brown, who grew up in Purley, said: "I firmly believe that this kind of multi-sensory, mind blowing attraction represents a glimpse of what the future holds for theme parks the world over.

"Akin to my shows, I ask that when you board the train, the secrets remain mine and yours to share and fear, and you don't spoil the experience by telling others. People should note that this is not an experience for the faint hearted, and ensure you are in the right frame of mind to take full advantage of the journey I will send you on."

More details at thorpepark.com.

“This is not an experience for the faint hearted...”

OFF THE RAILS



Sandown Park Racecourse's General Manager Phil White

We're entering a busy time for the Sandown Park Racecourse team, with five racedays before we host the end of season bet365 Jump Finale day on 23 April. We then embark on an exciting programme of flat racing through the summer.

On 6 February Sandown Park Racecourse will be hosting the Betfred Day, featuring the Grade 1 Betfred Scilly Isles Novices' Chase and the Betfred Masters Handicap Chase. These are top class, highly-contested races that attract horses and jockeys from across the country.

More Of That is one of the star names among 14 entries for the Betfred TV Scilly Isles Novices' Chase on Saturday.

The Jonjo O'Neill-trained 2014 World Hurdle winner has returned from injury winning both of his races this season and is likely to battle it out against a field including five runners from the dominant Willie Mullins yard in Ireland. We look forward to seeing Le Reve, winner of last year's Betfred Masters Handicap Chase attempt to defend his title by running in the contest this year.

The day offers seven races, guaranteeing a day full of action, and frequently provides some helpful pointers ahead of the Cheltenham Festival in March.

Later in the month we will be hosting the Royal Artillery Gold Cup Day (19 February), where the bravery and dedication of the British Armed Forces is celebrated. If the splendour and fanfare of the Armed Forces is your thing then don't miss this day to see the Royal Artillery Hunt hounds parade, and watch army personnel ride in the feature race, the Royal Artillery Gold Cup, first run in 1878. This is a truly unique race - it is restricted to horses that are owned or leased by those who are serving or have served in the Royal Artillery or one of its recognised Establishments or Units. Added to this, the jockeys must be amateurs and either past or existing members of the Armed Forces.

This week we were delighted to announce another of our Evening at the Races Music Night acts – we will be welcoming Busted to Sandown Park Racecourse on 20 July. The original Busted line-up have reunited and will be touring this summer for the first time in 12 years. It's sure to be a fun night, full of their hits, including their four UK number ones. The reunited Busted join Bryan Adams (4 August) on Sandown Park's roster of summer racing and music nights. Tickets are now on sale for both of these nights, and can be booked at sandown.co.uk. We will soon be announcing another music act due to perform at Sandown Park this summer – so watch this space!

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XIAN, High Street, Orpington: As recommended by Ben Toovey and Matthew on Twitter, Xian is a favourite for Orpington folk. It is rated four and a half out of five on TripAdvisor, where it also has a Certificate of Excellence. Even the Michelin guide inspectors liked it, writing: "Stylish, modern dining room with banquette seating, bamboo matting on the walls and six super lithographs of the famous Terracotta Warriors of Xian. Appealing menu offers flavoursome, authentic Chinese dishes, with something for everyone."

GOOD EARTH, High Street, Esher and Bellevue Road, Wandsworth Common (restaurants) and Ridgeway, Wimbledon; Friars Stile Road, Richmond and St John's Hill, Battersea (takeaways). Wandsworth Guardian's own review described the Wandsworth Common's branch's interior as 'something else' while praising its healthy food while Zagat London called its menu 'innovative and eclectic' and even the Daily Mail was impressed. The Esher restaurant also came recommended to us on Twitter.

SPICE N ICE, South Park Hill, Croydon: Another TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence holder, this is a good option if you're party is not all totally sold on Chinese food, specialising in Thai and Indian cuisine as well.

MANDARIN PALACE, Widmore Road, Bromley: Independently run and opened in 1989, Mandarin Palace boasts and enviable TripAdvisor rating of four and half out of five and a Certificate of Excellence. Plus there's a 15 per cent discount

CHINESE CHOICES

Chinese New Year is coming up on February 8 and to celebrate we've drawn up a list of some of the best Chinese restaurants in south London and north Kent. We asked our followers on Twitter and Facebook for feedback and we scoured TripAdvisor for some hot tips and here are the results.



for takeaway orders.

MING OF THE AVENUE, Avenue Road, Bexleyheath: A favourite of the folks in Bexleyheath, Ming's has amassed another four and a half out of five rating on TripAdvisor. Recent reviewer 1710Tom wrote: "Atmosphere excellent and very family friendly. Have been here before and service continues to be very good and efficient."

MAGIC WOK, Saint Mark's Hill,

Surbiton: With nearly 15 years serving fine Peking cuisine to the people of Surbiton, Magic Wok has earned its Certificate of Excellence and rave reviews on TripAdvisor. **PHOENIX, Mitcham Road, West Croydon:** As recommended by The Retired Dread on Twitter, family-run Phoenix boasts of 'serving the best Chinese cuisine on this side of Croydon' and their website says 'we guarantee you'll be coming back

again and again once you've tasted what our chefs have to offer'.

SLURP, Streatham High Road (restaurant) and Lower Richmond Road, Putney (take away): Recommended by photographer Osman Deen, Slurp offers cuisine from all over the Far East, including Japan, China and Thailand. "Yum yum," says our hungry snapper.

Keep the family happy this half term with these events.

SING-A-LONG-A FROZEN at New Wimbledon Theatre on Monday, February 15: Frozen fever is still going strong and this screening of the modern Disney classic features a live host who guides you through the interactive show, teaches you how to use your free props bag, warms up your vocal chords and teaches you some dance moves in order to bring the movie to life. Tickets cost £15.90. Go to atgkick-ets.com/Wimbledon

SUPER CAMPS: Blenheim High School, Epsom; Blackheath High School; Duraven School, Streatham; Homefield Prep School, Sutton; Knole Academy, Sevenoaks; Putney High School; Royal Russell School, Croydon; St Dunstan's College, Catford; Tiffin School, Kingston; Weston Green School, Thames Ditton; Whitgift School, South Croydon; Wimbledon High School.

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The week-long camps have been entertaining youngsters during the holidays for 20 years and now operate in 80 locations. There are multi-activity courses, outdoors adventures and special courses in science, cooking and arts and crafts. Camps cost in the region of £42 a day or £168 for the week. Go to super-camps.co.uk

JUNIOR GOLF HALF-TERM CAMP at Central London Golf Centre, Wandsworth, from Monday, February 15, to Friday, February 19. Children of all levels can spend a week learning and improving their golf, complete with coaching, challenges, competitions and tasks. It costs £30 for 9am to noon or £45 from noon to 3pm. Go to clgc.co.uk

DEADGOODPRIZES

Deadpool stars Ryan Reynolds is the story of a former Special Forces operative turned mercenary who is subjected to an experiment that leaves him with accelerated healing and a dark sense of humour. We have five sets of Deadpool goodies to give away. To be in with a chance of winning, simply like our Vibe south London Facebook page – [facebook.com/sldnvibe](https://www.facebook.com/sldnvibe) – find this story and leave a comment telling us what your superhero name would be. We'll pick the winners (must be in the UK) on the day of the film's release, February 10.



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Administrator scoops coveted award

DEBBIE Graham from the Caterham office of leading estate agents Cubitt & West has got plenty to celebrate after scooping a top prize when the company's parent group, Arun Estates, held its annual awards night recently.

Debbie beat off stiff competition from all 44 Cubitt & West offices across Surrey, Sussex and Hampshire to take the title of Top Administrator. She was presented with her award by Paul Rooney and David Lench – respectively group chairman and managing director of Arun Estates – amid enthusiastic applause from around 600 staff attending the gala event, held at the Effingham Park Hotel near Gatwick last month.

Commenting on her achievement, Cubitt & West's regional MD Chris Nathan said: "Although estate agency is all about teamwork, inevitably the spotlight usually tends to fall on the successful instruction-getters and sales people. However, they would be the first to admit that they couldn't do their job without highly professional and efficient



Debbie Graham with her award

support. By helping to ensure that everything in our offices runs like clockwork, branch administrators play an absolutely key role in the delivery of great customer service. So, my warmest congratulations to Debbie, who during a particularly busy year did an exceptional job in keeping our Caterham office operating smoothly and efficiently at all times."

There was also good news for business development partner Dominic Butler and his team in the

Sutton office. First, Dominic was awarded the coveted Top Lister title in recognition of securing more instructions than anyone else in the group, which has over 120 sales and lettings offices right across the South East. He and his team also then went on to take the overall Top Office title.

The awards were presented by Paul Rooney and David Lench – respectively, the chairman and group MD of Arun Estates – amid enthusiastic applause from some



Cubitt and West Sutton celebrate at the awards night

600 managers and staff attending last month's gala event, held at the Effingham Park Hotel near Gatwick. Commenting on this remarkable double achievement,

Cubitt & West's regional managing director Chris Nathan said: "Successful estate agency is about great leadership and great teamwork. These awards prove

that our Sutton office has got both, with Dominic really leading from the front with a superb solo effort and clearly inspiring everyone in the office to give their best.

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Public Notices

Transport for London

Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984

The A3 Gla Road (Kingston By-Pass, Royal Borough Of Kingston Upon Thames) (Temporary Prohibition Of Traffic And Stopping) Order 2016

1. Transport for London hereby gives notice that it intends to make the above named Traffic Order under section 14(1) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 for the purpose specified in paragraph 2. The effect of the Order is summarised in paragraph 3.

2. The purpose of the Order is to enable resurfacing works to take place on Kingston by-pass and Tolworth Rise South.

3. The effect of the Order will be to prohibit and vehicle from:

(1) entering, exiting, stopping or proceeding on Kingston by-pass in a southbound direction between South Lane and Princes Avenue;

(2) entering, exiting, stopping or proceeding in a northbound direction on Tolworth Rise South between Warren Drive South and Manor Drive North;

(3) entering, exiting, stopping or proceeding on Tolworth Rise South between Warren Drive South and Kingston Road.

Works shall be phased such that 1) and 3) above shall not be in force at the same time.

The Order will be effective at certain times from on the 19th February 2016 until 17th September 2016 every night 10:00 PM to 05:00 AM or when the works have been completed whichever is the sooner. The prohibitions will apply only during such times and to such extent as shall from time to time be indicated by traffic signs.

4. The prohibitions will not apply in respect of:

(1) any vehicle being used for the purposes of those works or for fire brigade, ambulance or police purposes;

(2) anything done with the permission or at the direction of a police constable in uniform or a person authorised by Transport for London.

5 At such times as the prohibition is in force an alternative route will be indicated by traffic signs.

For Tolworth Rise Slip Road closure

(1) via Kingston by-pass, Hook Rise South, Kingston by-pass

(2) via Vincent Avenue, Barnsbury Lane, Warren Drive South

For Kingston by-pass closure (South Lane to Tolworth Underpass)

(1) Via South Lane (bus access), Malden Way, Tolworth Rise South (service road), Hook Rise South

For Kingston by-pass closure (Tolworth Underpass)

(2) Via Tolworth Rise South, Hook Rise South

Dated this 4th day of February 2016


Mufu Durowoju

Network Impact Management Team Manager

Road Space Management - Operations, Transport for London

Palestra, 197 Blackfriars Road, London, SE1 8NJ

MAYOR OF LONDON



TRANSPORT FOR LONDON

VALERIE JOY HILL (Deceased)

Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the aforementioned deceased, late of Orchard Avenue New Malden Surrey KT3 4JT who died on 16/12/2015, are required to send particulars thereof in writing to the undersigned Solicitors on or before 08/04/2016, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to claims and interests of which they have had notice.

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T462594

ANN MARGARET BELL (Deceased)

Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the aforementioned deceased, late of 80a Park Road Kingston KT2 5JZ, who died on 24/09/2015, are required to send particulars thereof in writing to the undersigned Solicitors on or before 05/04/2016, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to claims and interests of which they have had notice.

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(Ref: DFJB/BEL27-5)

T462669

JOYCE MILDRED PALMER (Deceased)

Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the aforementioned deceased, late of 31 Hill Crescent Surbiton Surrey KT5 8DP, who died on 29/09/2015, are required to send particulars thereof in writing to the undersigned Solicitors on or before 15/04/2016 after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to claims and interests of which they have had notice.

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(Ref: FXM/Palmer)

T462609

WOJCIECH MIERZEJEWSKI (Deceased)

Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the aforementioned deceased, late of 28 King Henrys Road Kingston Upon Thames Surrey KT1 3QA, who died on 27/02/2014, are required to send particulars thereof in writing to the undersigned on or before 08/04/2016, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to claims and interests of which they have had notice.

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Obituary

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Road test: Skoda Octavia vRS 230

THERE is a lot to love about the Octavia vRS as we know it. The spacious and good value mid-sized offering can be had in petrol or diesel forms, in hatchback or estate and with manual or slick DSG gearboxes, all of which are blessed with impressive performance and handling. But now there is a 230 model to make choosing even more difficult.

In petrol-only 230 form, the power output has been bumped by 10PS to give 230 in total, or 227bhp in old money, while underneath it also benefits from the clever electronic differential as standard. Marking out the 230 model from a regular vRS are the 19in alloy wheels, black detailing on the door mirrors, grille and roof rails on the estate, as well as unique instrument displays.

They may be subtle differences to the regular hot Octavia, but the vRS 230 is even better-looking. The black detailing around the exterior gives it a little more menace, although it is far from a boy racer's hack; Skoda has always managed to produce sporty cars that look good, but will not attract the wrong kind of attention, which is one reason why they have proved so popular. There is also the added cache of owning the 230 model over the standard car, which might well prompt a few people to trade up.

The other reason the Octavia vRS is so popular is that you can have it as an estate, which makes it far easier to justify as a family wagon. As with the standard Octavia, the boot space is excellent; a yawning 610 litres

with the rear seats in place and up to 1,740 litres if you fold them. It is sensibly shaped too, with storage areas and lashing eyes for bigger stuff. In the cabin, there is plenty of space too, and unless you need the vast legroom of the bigger Superb, you will be able to fit adults in all five seats.

Upping the performance factor has not diminished the core Octavia qualities of being undemanding and easy to get on with. There is a brief burble from the 2.0-litre turbocharged unit when you fire it up, but the clutch is light and the gearshift easy and slick.

The extra 10PS does not transform the vRS 230 from hot into scorching, but it is welcome nonetheless. It is a joyously flexible unit that has lots of low-down



2015 Skoda Octavia vRS 230 (54443667)

torque but is also keen to rev, with strong acceleration right around the dial. The standard sports exhaust adds a little more to the vocals too, although it is far from raucous.

It also blends ride and handling prowess in a well-judged fashion.

The electronic differential means you can accelerate harder and earlier, and it helps to pull the vRS through bends with alacrity. It is sufficiently good fun to be entertaining, but not so hyperactive it will drive you crazy on the motorway.

FACTS AT A GLANCE
Skoda Octavia vRS 230, £27,550
Engine: 2.0-litre petrol unit producing 227bhp and 258lb ft of torque
Transmission: Six-speed manual gearbox driving the front wheels
Top speed: 152mph.



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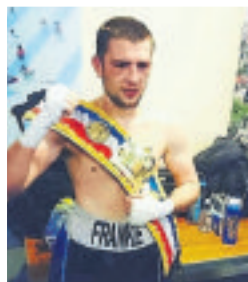
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SURBITON Ladies' GB internationals Giselle Ansley, Georgie Twigg, Hollie Webb and Sarah Haycroft, right, head to Australia next week for a six-Test series starting on February 12. The quartet will miss next week's league trip to Canterbury on February 13. The club's men resume their Men's Hockey League Premier Division campaign with the visit of Brooklands MU to Sugden Road on Saturday.



Champ: Danny Parsons with his belt and pre-fight snacks

Parsons produces a Jaffa

KINGSTON'S Danny Parsons proved the humble Jaffa Cake is indeed the food of champions at the weekend, writes Stuart Amos.

The 22-year-old claimed the British challenge super lightweight title via a technical knockout during West Country Boxing's 'Brawl in the Guildhall' show in Plymouth on Saturday.

Parsons' clash with local hero Chris Adaway was the headline act and the pair did not disappoint as Parsons eventually triumphed when he put his rival on the canvas for a second time in the final round.

It is the former Teddington High School student's first title as a professional fighter, having only signed with manager Micky Helliet in December.

The ex-Queensbury Boxing League regular celebrated with the belt in his dressing room after the fight where his pre-fight snack of choice was clearly on display.

Jaffa Cakes are recommended by sports nutritionists as they are low in fat and most of their calories come in the form of carbohydrate, which is converted to glycogen to fuel muscles.

And they clearly had the desired effect as Parsons surprised his opponent by going the distance, with Adaway assuming his rival would fade after the opening four rounds.



Good grounding: Danny Parsons in Queensbury action

HONOURED ELLIE: Kingston Grammar School student rising through ranks

Award just for starters

SPORTS EDITOR
STUART AMOS

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Award: Ellie de Heer

SURBITON Hockey Club youngster Ellie de Heer hopes to follow in the footsteps of the club's international stars.

The Kingston Grammar School student was named the Hockey Writers' Club's U16 girls' player of the year earlier this month, with clubmate Charlotte Calnan picking up the award for U18 girls' player of year.

Sugden Road skipper Sarah Haycroft, an ex-Kingston Grammar School student, won the youth award in 2009 en route to becoming a full England international.

De Heer has played alongside the 24-year-old in three Women's Hockey League Premier Division games this season, having helped Sur-

biton's U16 girls to back-to-back national titles.

And the Hampton-based England U18s international wants to match Haycroft's on-field achievements.

"I got nominated at the end of last year, which was a surprise in itself, but to win it was amazing," said the 16-year-old.

"It is really nice to be acknowledged for something you love to do.

"Sarah Haycroft is an inspiration and it would be nice to follow in her footsteps.

"I played in the first two Premier League games this season and the last one before Christmas and that was great.

"Just to train with players like Sarah is amazing because we have such a strong squad filled with international players, you learn so much.

De Heer hopes to use the second half of the outdoor league season to force her way into Surbiton head coach Brett Garrard's plans for the EuroHockey Club Champions Cup in May.

Surbiton's league title defence resumes with a trip to the University of Birmingham on Saturday.

"I want to play as many games as I can and hopefully be part of the squad for



Action girl: Surbiton Hockey Club's Ellie de Heer, left, has high hopes for 2016 at Sugden Road, having risen through the international age group ranks with England

Europe," she added. "Even if I am not part of it, it is great just to have played with those players."

McCollin at the double as Ks close in on top five spot



Good timing: Andre McCollin, left, taps home against Wingate & Finchley. Full story and pictures at kingstonguardian.co.uk/sport

KINGSTONIAN striker Andre McCollin made it five goals in three Ryman Premier League games to help Ks to their fourth consecu-

tive win on Monday night.

All the goals in a 2-1 triumph over Wingate & Finchley came in the first 10 minutes, as McCollin's two

strikes – in the fourth and ninth minutes – sandwiched a sixth-minute Billy Healey equaliser.

The result put Ks up to

sixth in the table – one point off the top five – prior to the midweek fixtures.

Ks host Grays Athletic on Saturday.

SPORTSbrief



FOOTBALL: Former Corinthian Casuals striker Michael Salako, above, thought he had snatched a draw for Ryman Division One South strugglers Walton & Hersham on Saturday only to see visitors Molesey snatch a 3-2 win. Salako, who switched to Stompond Lane earlier this month, levelled matters at 2-2 in the 81st minute – after James McShane and Stafford Palmer had put the Moles 2-1 up – only for Reis Stanislaus to net the winner a minute later. Casuals' home clash with Hastings United fell foul of the weather on Saturday and they head to Chipstead this Saturday.

ATHLETICS: Junior Team GB international Phoebe Law finished second at the South of England Cross Country Championships on Parliament Hill on Saturday. The 19-year-old clocked 22 minutes 33 seconds to finish only seven seconds adrift of U20 women's race winner Gemma Holloway. Clubmate Scott Evans finished in 53:40 to claim 37th in the senior men's race field of 1,000 athletes.

SWIMMING: Sixty-six Kingston Royals athletes have entered a total of 269 individual events at the Surrey Age Group Championships which start this weekend. Dylan Conway – who has entered 18 events, including relays – Blu Edmunds (18) and Lucy Hawley (20) will be the club's busiest swimmers during the month-long championships.

RUGBY: Old Emanuel saw their three-match Surrey Division One winning run halted by a 29-22 defeat at Old Wimbledonians on Saturday. Kingston RFC's trip to Law Society was postponed and re-scheduled for February 27.

FOOTBALL: Chessington & Hook United avoided Combined Counties League Premier Division defeat on Saturday after their home clash with Farnham Town was postponed. They head to Hanworth Villa this weekend.

FOOTBALL: Kingstonian's Ryman Premier League trip to Enfield Town on Saturday, which was postponed due to a waterlogged pitch, has been re-scheduled for March 22.